

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

All I can tell the hon. member—and he is well aware of it—is that the Secretary of State is not responsible for the programming neither of the private radio and television stations nor of the C.B.C. I can, however, give the assurance that the minister will call the attention of the Board of Broadcast Governors to any request of this kind that might be made in the future.

• (10:20 p.m.)

CANADIAN CENTENNIAL—CARDINAL LÉGER—
REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO LEPERS
IN AFRICA

Mr. Auguste Choquette (Loibinière): Mr. Speaker, when his Eminence Paul Emile Cardinal Léger recently made known his decision to leave the direction of the archdiocese of Montreal, it was such a momentous announcement that a deep impression of a great tragedy was created.

The unexpected departure of the distinguished prelate spread sorrow among all those who followed the rich tapestry of his good works and the magnificence of his sublime apostolate. Cardinal Léger, in giving up his present function, chooses a path which surely will lead him to a more fertile and lofty action on the moral plane.

However, a chasm is opened by the depth of such a loss.

The new horizons towards which the cardinal is headed show that he is prompted by a spirituality unattainable by ordinary people. However, his departure deprives both French and English Canada of an irreplaceable support.

The deep wisdom of that prominent churchman, the powerful example of his personality and his life are a source of inspiration that will not be easily replaced.

Our country is going through difficult times, Mr. Speaker. One only has to watch closely the events taking place here and there, the developments occurring every day to realize that the present situation in Canada is extremely serious, perhaps dangerous—one cannot say—but without being a prophet of doom, it can easily be foreseen. Who knows what leading part Cardinal Léger might have played, through his mere presence in this country, his sense of moderation, his objectivity, his deep influence in various quarters in this looming crisis which, one could say without being unduly pessimistic, could shake the very structures of Canada, to which we are still greatly attached.

The Cardinal will henceforth devote himself to a praise worthy work, and no one

should complain; on the contrary, with spontaneity, with admiration, everyone expresses his joy and voices his encouragement in the new task the Cardinal is setting out to accomplish.

Still, I should not like to see his departure pass unnoticed by the Canadian government. Moreover, I feel that a man who has served his country so well, on both the spiritual and temporal planes certainly deserves from his country an outstanding token of gratitude.

I would suggest that before he leaves, he receive from the authorities of his country, the highest available decoration because he richly deserves it.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that it might offend the humility of a man who tries precisely to shield himself from all those sumptuous things, but I believe that we cannot remain indifferent to such a departure, that we cannot remain inattentive, as Canadians, to the tremendous task carried out by the Cardinal, and our country, his mother country, must honour him in an appropriate fashion. Therefore, I believe that the best way to honour him, the best decoration we can offer him, would be to establish a fund which could assist him in the task he wants to perform with the underprivileged and afflicted people.

In my opinion, no action or gesture would be more appropriate than that of a government willing to subsidize, directly or indirectly, the task which Cardinal Léger wants to undertake.

I shall conclude my remarks by saying that in the past, Mr. Speaker, our external aid has been considerable. We have particularly helped the Commonwealth countries at a time when the British Commonwealth needed it. Only this year will the French-speaking countries begin to receive substantial assistance from the Canadian government, \$12 million as compared to the \$14 million which will be given to the Commonwealth countries.

I think that if we want to help both French-speaking countries and at the same time the task undertaken by Cardinal Léger, we should give important financial assistance to the Cardinal.

Mr. Albert Béchard (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I have been requested by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin), in the absence of his parliamentary secretary, to